

No 72

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Printed March 9th
1826

A

Dissertation

on the

Madrasms of that disorder of
children

Gustavus A. B. Horner. Va.

Paper book
1827

A

Observations

on the

Character of

children

by

John A. B. M.D.

Marasmus, or general wasting of the body has within a few years, been ascertained to depend on derangement of some one of the chylopoietic viscera, or of the alimentary canal. Ayr in his excellent treatise on this complaint observes "if the views which I have taken be correct there is no difference between the Marasmus of children, and that disorder of adults, which may strictly be denominated Bilious, either in the nature, the causes, or the means of cure."

This author, therefore, considers Marasmus and Bilious as synonymous terms, and comprehends under them every variety of this disorder. adopting his plan I divide Marasmus into two parts, acute and chronic.

The material is a fine, light-colored paper, and the text is written in a cursive hand. The page is numbered 10 in the top right corner. The text is arranged in several paragraphs, with some lines indented. The handwriting is somewhat faded and the paper shows signs of age, including some staining and wear along the edges. The left side of the image shows the binding of the book, with many pages visible.

The chronic is distinguished by a morbidly
craving appetite, and not accompanied by
much fever, but in the acute form there
is loss of appetite, and a considerable de-
gree of fever.

Marasmus is met with in infancy, child-
hood, and adult age; I, however, shall
treat of it only as it occurs in infants, and
children, limiting the age of the former to
two years, and that of the latter to four
teen years.

In infants this complaint is at first attend-
ed with languor, a disposition to sleep du-
ring the day, and with restlessness at night.
It takes food in the commencement with
readiness, and may be soothed by it, but
in a short time all appetite is lost, it
cries, and becomes extremely restless. The
breathing towards night, is quicker, and

lender, attended by stupor, frequent startings,
heat of body, and coldness of the extremities
of the infant be several months of age,
and of a vigorous constitution, its bowels
will frequently become loose, and the ap-
petite continue natural. The stools vary
much, being sometimes of a yellowish green
colour, and curdy, and at other times parti-
coloured, and slimy. The flesh is flabby,
the tongue white, and not unfrequently
covered with aphthae. Sore, a rash about
the body, and eruptions about the nose,
mouth, and ears are common.

Before long, a considerable increase of
fever ensues, every kind of food is loath-
ed, the restlessness is greater; there is stu-
por, extreme emaciation, convulsions,
and, lastly, death.

The chronic stage of marasmus in children

comes on insidiously: there being at first
merely an increase of appetite, a partial
loss of animation, & a reluctance to rise at
its usual hour. It soon loses all desire
to engage in its wonted amusements, com-
plains of chilliness, and has pains in
the knees, and thighs. The breath becomes
fetid; the tongue is white in the morning
before eating; and the bowels are either
regular, or loose. In a short time it is faint,
drowsy, always disposed to sleep during the
day, and when sleeping starts, and cries
out as if from fear. A spasmodic cough
towards evening is a common symptom. The
appetite is good or bad, as the bowels are
loose, or costive, the stools are slimy-
and greenish; the skin dry; the pulse hard
and quick, especially, during sleep; the
strength fails, the flesh gradually wastes, as

As the case advances, and the appetite, of
two frequent variations from good to bad,
is at last completely destroyed.

An exposure to cold will now easily
develop the acute form of the disease,
which is now marked with symptoms
of considerable febrile excitement, and
particularly at night, the child at this
time is restless, has a hot, and dry skin,
hurried respiration, and is much distur-
bed while asleep. There is often pain in
the head, uneasiness of the stomach, and
bowels, a white tongue, scanty, high co-
loured, and turbid urine, costive, or loose
bowels, and when loose, discharging sti-
my, or yeasty feces of a very offensive smell.
As might be expected, the complexion at
this stage is pale, and sallow, and
the countenance languid, and sunken.

All of the symptoms enumerated will seldom or never be met with in a single case; and in some instances one or more of them will so predominate, that some other important disease may be thought to exist. Now and then we will have all the symptoms of worms, or perhaps those of *Tubercles Mesentericas*. In infancy *Marasmus* may be readily confounded with the irritation from dentition, and not uncommonly with the Diagnostic symptoms of *Hydrocephalus Internus*. "The swelled, inflamed, and irritable state of the gums of infants," says Ayrer, which is attributed to some natural difficulty in dentition, may be considered as a symptom only, and not as it is generally thought a cause of this complaint." Concerning the strong resemblance of *Marasmus* in some instances, to *Hydroce-*

Phalus Internus, the same distinguished writer remarks "that he had been lead on a great many occasions to suspect that this fatal disease was commencing, and in two or three instances he had been induced to believe that it was actually present, and had been gratified to find by the result that he had been mistaken." "There is, in fact, says he, often considerable difficulty, especially in infancy, to determine when the symptoms proper to *Marasmus* terminate, and those belonging to *Hydrocephalus Internus* begin; and it is frequently by the result alone, that an opinion of their nature can be formed."

Notwithstanding the difficulty in some cases, of forming a correct Diagnosis between these two complaints, Dr. Ayre

believes that Hydrocephalus *Spurious* to
a certainty exists, where the child screams,
carries his hand to the head, and de-
sires to have it low, and to be pressed
between the occiput, and forehead when
there is delirium in the day, dispropor-
tioned to the fever; where there is dou-
ble vision, or blindness, and a slow in-
termitting pulse.

Pathology. Many suppose that, Stramonium
is dependant merely on a loaded, and con-
stipated state of the bowels, but this opi-
nion appears to be erroneous, and also in-
concilable with the phenomena exhibi-
ted by the disease, and with the treat-
ment found the most successful. The
symptoms are always those of a disordered
state of the chylopoietic, viscera, and ~~the~~

we will find that the disease though
relieved, yet can not be eradicated by
the unloading of the bowels.

It is the opinion of Johnson, and of Ayre, that
Hæmorrhæa depends on a deranged state
of the alimentary canal, in which all
of the chyliferous viscera sympathise.
Dr Ayre thinks the stomach may be disor-
dered in its functions by a cause direct-
ly applied to it, and may induce de-
rangement in the Liver; or, that the
stomach may become disordered by
the like sympathies, from a complaint
in the Liver. It is doubtful, to what par-
ticular derangement of the stomach we
should attribute an interruption,
or irregularity in the functions of the
Liver. It is supposed by Ayre, that the
tough phlegm, which is always pre-

sent in the stomach, and bowels of those
affected with marasmus has a greater
fluence in aggravating, if not in produ-
cing it, and, he thinks, that this phlegm
contributes to the exciting of the disease
by its own morbid irritation, or by its
interrupting digestion; by which the
stomach is prevented from receiving that
particular stimulus which is necessary
to excite the liver, and other subordin-
ate organs to their full and proper ac-
tions. This derangement of the stomach he
thinks may communicate a morbid
and imperfect stimulus to the liver; where-
by its secretion is impeded, and becomes
of an unhealthy nature: that an interrup-
tion in the accustomed action of the liver
occasions a congestion of its vessels, and
the diminished secretion of bile gives rise

and in the present state of the
affairs of the country, it is
impossible to suppose that the
people of this country are not
sensible of the necessity of
a more extensive and liberal
education, and that they are
not desirous to see their
children and their countrymen
enjoy the same advantages
which they themselves have
enjoyed. It is therefore
the duty of the Legislature
to provide for the education
of the poor, and to see that
the funds which are set apart
for that purpose are properly
applied, and that the schools
are well conducted, and that
the teachers are qualified and
well paid.

to a congestion of the Vena Portarum; that the congestion of these vessels can only be overcome by restoring the secretion; by a discharge of blood, from the loaded extremities of the Vena Portarum, or by a hemorrhoidal flux.

Dr Chapman entertains an opinion with respect to this disease, corresponding very nearly with that of Dr Syre: he believes Marasmus consists in a derangement of the alimentary canal, from a Stomachic Diathesis, in which all of the chylificative viscera and a part of the lymphatic system sympathize.

The correctness of the latter opinion is evident on a Post Mortem examination, which discovers the intestines filled with vitiated feces, and a

thick, mucus — the liver enlarged &
the lymphatic glands so tumefied,
and indurated, as evidently to have
prevented in a great measure the ab-
sorption of chyle, and a proper de-
gree of nourishment to the system.

Remote Causes — The most common of
these, are cold, an improper diet, &
the impure air of crowded, or ill
ventilated situations. The fall,
from a predisposition acquired by
the previous heats of summer, is thought
to be the season, in which cold most
easily excites this disorder. One of the
most common causes of Malaria,
according to some of the most dis-
tinguished authors, is the withhold-
ing of the natural nourishment,

the milk of the mother, and loading
the infant's stomach with the most
indigestible articles of food. It may
be laid down, observes Ayr, as an
incontrovertible fact, that during
the first six or eight months of an
infant's life, the only suitable food
for it is the milk of the mother; all
artificially prepared food, having
the strongest tendency to disorder
it, and producing, too commonly,
symptoms of a biliary derangement,
in their most marked, and fatal
form."

To support the correctness of this asser-
tion we have the authority of Hugh
Smith, who says it is a solemn truth
that almost every woman is capable of
supporting her infant; that confining it

altogether to her breast will prove
of the greatest advantage both to one
and to the other; and that every
day it will gain strength, and
at last overcome every disease.

With the above mentioned causes
we may enumerate the giving of
Laudanum, and the too early
administration of opium. The ap-
plication of tight bandages about
the abdomen, is said, to predis-
pose children to this complaint,
by compressing the parts within
the abdomen, and either interfe-
ring with their development, or
preventing them from performing
their natural functions.

We will know that parents should be
careful to protect their children from

Treatment $\frac{3}{4}$ No class of medicines
appears to be better suited to this
disorder, than that of Purgatives, and
of them calomel is entitled to our
greatest degree of confidence, from
its specific action on the Liver. In
what manner this medicine acts
on the Liver has not been pre-
cisely ascertained. It has been sup-
posed by some that it affects that
organ by making an impression
on the stomach, and restoring its
secretions to their healthy state; or
by imparting to the stomach a stim-
ulus, which is communicated by
sympathy to the Liver. These suppo-
sitions, hardly merit our attention; for
we will know that precisely the
same effects would, when Mercury

is applied to the skin.

The use of calomel, by the advice of Dr. Chapman, should be preceded by some of the milder purgatives; but he recommends, where the disease is confirmed, that we should rely chief-ly on active, and frequent purging with this article. Daily purging, he says, instead of weakening invariably invigorates the child.

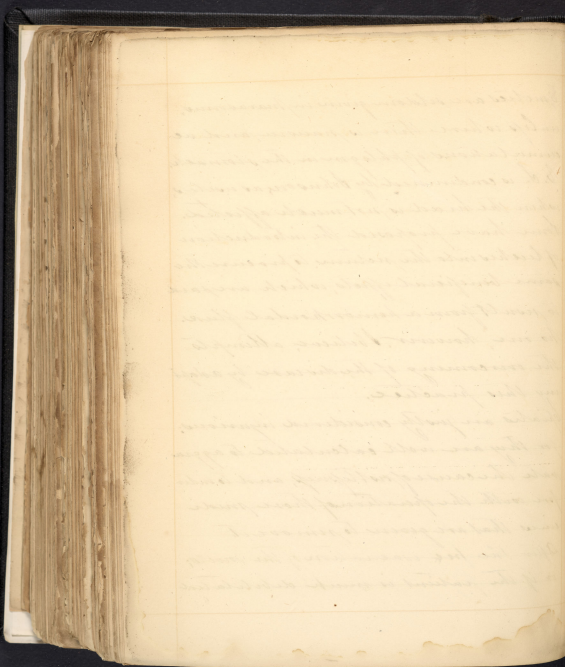
Dr. Ayrer differs a little, from Dr. Chapman in the administration of calomel. The former says, that spasms consists in derangement of the liver; and that whatever irritation may be present in the bowels from morbid accumulations, this medicine is not usefully employed, as a purge; but that its

proper action being on the liver, medicines of a strictly purgative kind should be selected for their evacuation.

Calomel if given in a large dose, is well known to operate actively as a cathartic, and, therefore, it seems advisable that we should first employ it, as recommended by Dr. Chopman, and afterwards as is advised by Dr. Sydenham. When the patient is convalescent, & the symptoms of Biliary derangement subside in a measure, or become stationary, Mercurial frictions to the right side have been found more efficacious than an obstinate perseverance in the employment of calomel.

Emetics are seldom given in *marasmus*, unless where there is nausea, and accumulations of phlegm in the stomach. V. S. is condemned by Johnson, as useless, when the head is not much affected. Some have proposed the introduction of leeches into the rectum, to procure the same beneficial effects, which are said to result from a hemorrhoidal flux. No one, however, I believe, attempts the overcoming of the disease by adopting this practice.

Griates are justly considered injurious; for they are well calculated to aggravate the cause of costiveness, and to interfere with the operations of those medicines that are given to remove it. After the ~~pre~~ vaccination of the bowels, or if the patient is much debilitated



tonics will be required. Dr Chapman
speaks favorably of Bark, and the
preparations of Iron, with small do-
ses of Rhubarb to obviate costiveness.
As an auxiliary means of cure, the cold
bath, warm clothing, and exercise
will be useful. But of all things
in the treatment of Marasmus, no-
thing perhaps requires more atten-
tion than the diet. Every article of
food should be easy of digestion,
and ought to be given in mode-
rate quantity, so as not to oppress
the stomach, whose powers are ve-
ry imperfect.

No kind of nourishment is so good,
in the opinion of Sydenham, for infants,
as the milk of the mother, and
he tells us, that he has frequently

known the infants of the poor, to per-
ish, notwithstanding every attempt
to save them, solely from their be-
ing deprived of the breasts of their
mothers. To attempt then, he says, to
relieve an infant from this disor-
der while it is deprived of its nat-
ural food, will be as fruitless, as
it must appear unnatural.

James the 1st of the year 1604
and the 1st of the year 1605
the 1st of the year 1606
the 1st of the year 1607
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